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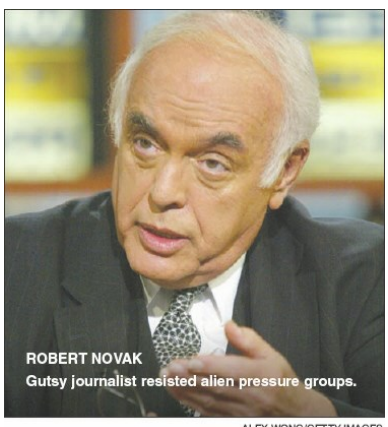

ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

Mainstream Media Didn't Tell You Bob Novak Opposed Israeli Power

By Michael Collins Piper

Do you know the name of the well-known American journalist (and television personality) who once published a column suggesting there was a bigger conspiracy behind the Oklahoma City bombing, raising questions about the role of a federal undercover informant in the affair?

This same journalist often riled the Jewish lobby with his candid reportage, including evidence Israel knew the *USS Liberty* was an American ship when Israeli forces attacked the *Liberty* on June 8, 1967.

If you guessed the journalist to be Robert Novak, you were right. However, following the widely noted death on August 18 of the veteran newsman, virtually all accounts of Novak's remarkable career omit mention of those provocative facts.

On Oct. 20, 1997 Novak shocked many with a column in *The Washington Post* describing "grave and disturbing questions" raised by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, a distinguished British journalist, who was suggesting mysterious German immigrant Andreas Strassmeir—who had been operating in "patriot" and "white separatist" circles in the United States—may have been an undercover informant moving alongside Tim McVeigh in the days preceding the Oklahoma bombing.

Novak emphasized Evans-Pritchard was "no conspiracy-theory lunatic" but instead "was known in Washington for accuracy, industry and courage" and that he had "offered leads to discovering a pattern of lies and deception after Oklahoma City that, if verified, would approach Vietnam and Watergate in undermining American citizens' confidence in their government."

In fact, Novak echoed what *The Spotlight* had reported earlier (and covered in further detail later) about Strassmeir and his close associate, Kirk Lyons (who later played a part in the conspiracy to destroy *The Spotlight* in 2001).

NOVAK WAS RIGHT

Now, years since, it is generally acknowledged among those familiar with the Oklahoma scenario that Strassmeir was an undercover informant and that the conspiracy was as insidious as Novak had suggested might be the case.

Novak was one of only a few "mainstream" journalists— including the late Sam Francis—who delved into the Strassmeir connection. And that was in keeping with Novak's dogged devotion to factual newsgathering.

Ironically, many reports of Novak's death focused on his role in leaking the name of CIA operative Valerie Plame (wife of ex-Ambassador Joe Wilson, a vehement critic of the Bush administration's war in Iraq) implying Novak supported the war when, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

Novak not only opposed the Iraq war (which was at the top of the list of the demands of the Israeli lobby) but many years before Novak had established a solid record—in concert with his longtime co-columnist Roland Evans—in forthrightly criticizing the Jewish lobby.

OPPOSED THE ISRAELI LOBBY

Many pro-Israel voices had angry words for Novak who, born Jewish, became a devout convert to Catholicism, a point Novak's critics brought up in an accusatory fashion.

David Frum, a Jewish speechwriter for George W. Bush, charged Novak with being among a group of what Frum dubbed "unpatriotic conservatives" who were dangers to Israel (and the United States) because they did not support the Iraq war.

Norman Podhoretz, long editor of the American Jewish Committee's magazine *Commentary*, went so far as to claim Novak might welcome "repeated—and worse—attacks than the one we suffered on Sept. 11." Podhoretz was incensed Novak had dared, among other things, in a column, to quote the widely quoted stratfor.com, a private intelligence agency run by ex-CIA official George Friedman (a Jewish supporter of Israel) who reported on Sept. 11 that "the big winner today, intentionally or not, is the state of Israel."

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Although, as noted, most coverage of Novak's death avoided mentioning the Jewish lobby's war against Novak, the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA) greeted his death by calling Novak a "harsh critic of Israel," alleging his "distaste for robust Judaism," charging that his "attacks on the pro-Israel community repeatedly veered into the conspiratorial," rushing to note Novak "also was a rare mainstream voice" suggesting Israel's attack on the *USS Liberty* was deliberate. The JTA was also distressed because Novak was critical of actions by Israel he (and others) perceived as harmful to Christian Palestinians.

MADE POWERFUL ENEMIES

Novak's entertaining memoirs are often revealing, crafted in the wry fashion for which he was known. For example, Novak bared a remark by pro-Israel intriguer Richard Perle about then-Secretary of State Colin Powell that many might consider "racist" and certainly condescending: Perle told Novak that "Colin would make a good secretary of health and human services or housing and urban development. But he never should be permitted to have anything to do with national security."

You see, Washington insiders often said HHS and HUD were the "token black" cabinet posts; so Perle was suggesting Powell was out of his league dealing with national security—an amazing suggestion considering Powell had previously served as both national security advisor and as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In his memoirs, Novak noted there were some who contended his long-time partner, Evans, had launched their column in collusion with pro-Arab elements in the State Department who wanted a regular public newspaper voice for their views.

In reflecting on the allegations, Novak said the Middle East issue was a major concern of Evans and that over some 21 years Evans wrote hundreds of columns "with the theme that Israeli intransigence sowed the seeds of war."While Novak did not write any of these columns, he added: "my name appeared on every one of them, and I agreed with my partner."

Novak noted that in 1975 he lunched with an editor from *The Newark Star-Ledger* who told him advertisers were not happy with the "anti-Israel" columns and asked if the duo could "ease up." Novak said he "gave an evasive answer about watching our language." Soon afterward, the *Star-Ledger* canceled the column, one of about 100 newspapers that did likewise during that time frame. "Whatever the reasons—and I had my suspicions," recalled Novak, "we never built back our base."

While, Novak said, the issue was never at the top of his own priority list, after Evans's retirement Novak wrote a handful of columns about Israel that echoed Evans's views.

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Michael Collins Piper can be heard every week day night live on the Internet at republicbroadcasting.org. He is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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